

1729.  
The Charitable Farmer of Somersetshire :

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G O D ' S Great and V Vonderful V Vork, 38

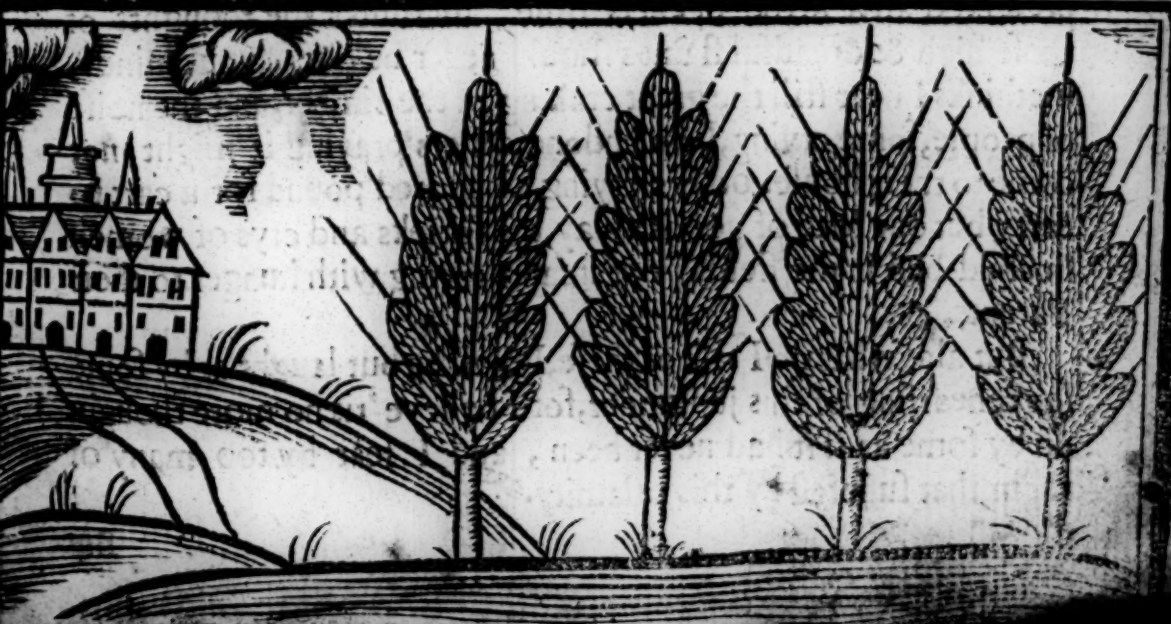
Being a True Relation of an Honest, Godly Man, that lived at *Welling*, within three Miles of the City of *Wells*, which sold his Wheat to poor people at Six Shillings a Bushel, when the Market price was Ten and Eleven Shillings, for which he was much derided and scoft at, by his Rich Neighbours ; but was recompenced by an extraordinary Crop of Wheat, the like never before heard of, each Stalk of Straw, having divers full large Ears, some Seven, some Eight, Nine, and Ten, so to Thirteen, but generally Ten Ears on every Straw throughout the Field, which was Ten Acres and upwards, of which, divers Ears are to be seen at divers Coffee-houses in the City of *London*.

Likewise a pattern for all Covetous Greedy-minded men, to be Charitable unto their poor Neighbours, from the consideration of so Remarkable an Example.

By Law. *white.* K

He findeth Seed to the Sower, and Bread for food, and will multiply your Seed, and increaseth fruits of your benevolence, 2 Cor. 9. 10.

He that with-holdeth Corn, the people shall curse, but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it, Prov 11. 26.



GOOD People, I would desire you to draw neer, and spare so much time as the Reading of this little Book will take reading over, to ye. For 'tis such a Subject that the Oldest Man or Woman living, never heard the like, nor Chronicles do not make mention of such another Wonder.

I think 'tis very well known to any sober Christian, that the wickedness of the times has draw'd Gods judgements on us sufficiently of late days, that is, I mean within these ten years, when first the sickness the Lord poured on us, which made thousands of rich people fall from all their pride and bravery into a shrowd and Coffin, and their carcases that in their life time was so pompar'd up with the best that this sinful world could afford, yet at last in a short time became a pray for worms, but no sooner the Lord had caused the destroying Angle to cease, but we like disobedient children as soon as the rod of correction was over, returned to our old sinful ways, which rais'd the Lords indignation against us, and even forst the Lord to kindle a fire amongst us, as we found to the ruine of many thousands of them, whom he preserved alive in the sickness time, methinks the thoughts of those high & dreadful flames should never be out of your minds, methinks I hear still the great craking of the timber, and the noise of people, some crying, I am undone, others praying it might not come to their house, others crying a hundred pound for a cart to carry but one load of goods away, the shrieks and crys of women in child-bed in the fields, poor infants crying with hunger to their Parents.

But alas what do I talk of these, I shall be but laught at by some for rehearsing of this judgment, for I believe 'tis no more thought on by some as if it had never been, and I fear by too many of them that suffered by this calamity,



But now behold the mercy of the Lord what a great blessing he bestowed on the builders of this City to raise so many great and stately fabricks out of a heap of rubbish to the wonderment of the whole world, for which his holy name be praised for ever, ever, Amen.

But neither mercies nor Judgements of God will work upon some peoples consciences, 'tis but the other day since the Warrs killed so many of our brave Sea-men, both Knights, Squires, and Gentlemen, and many others, whose lives were as sweet to them as the rest.

Which hath left a many poor Widdows and fatherless Children behind, that now stands in great need of their Husbands, and Children their fathers, that is fain to pinch and go with many hungry belly over they did before the wars came.

But now for me to come to my intended matter, which is a thing so strange that will cause a wonderment from all those that knows what belongs to the subject which I am ready to declare, if you will have the patience to stay but a short time till I rehearse it over, I hope you will not think much of your time, nor your penny neither if you buy the book, I believe 'tis very well known to all by sad experience I fear too many of the poorer sort that most kinds of provision have of late been dear, and more particularly bred, which is the staff of life. Wheat being sold in several places of England, for ten and eleven shillings a bushel or strike, in which scarcity many poor people suffered through the wretched covetousness of some rich Farmers, who kept up their Corn on purpose to make a Dearth, and would not bring it to market till they had got it to such a rate that the poor could not reach, as if it had been their Delight to starve the poor, it rising from ten to eleven, and so to twelve and upwards, all the last spring in many places in this Kingdom, which caused many risings by the poorer sort of people in several Markets to cut the Bagars sacks in pieces that is, those men that buys Corn in cheap Markets, and carries it



to other places, & there makes their prizes on it, and so hoys it up the market in both places, where they buy it and sell it: I see one Wednesday in VVoolverhampton market this spring above an hundred of men, old and young in arms, and cut those Baggers sacks, and took their corn, and filled their pockets with it, and said their wives and children was ready to starve. And at Oster in VVostershire was another rising by the poor against the rich Farmers for hoarding up their Corn, and at Wastle was the same, at Sturbridge, and Bromsgrave, and many other Markers in and about *England*, which are too many to set down here. For shall I tell you, the poor suffered so much Hunger, that they were faine to make Bread for their poor Children with Pease and Beans, and were exposed to much want and hardship, & yet poor souls after it was bakt, it went down with poor little Babes as sweet as Honey, when they were faine to take a Hatchet and Chop it to pieces: and truely they might have eaten Stones, if it had been possible, before they could have found any love or charity from these greedy covetous men, that sold their Corn at such a deere rate, as one above all the rest, that brought his Corn to sell in *VVolverhampton* Market, in the County of *Stafford*, having sold his Wheat three or four Market-days together for Nine or Ten Shillings a Strike: when the fifth day he had brought a great quantity of Corn to sell, expecting it would have risen still, but it did not fall out according to his desire, but fell six pence in a strike, to the great content of the poor, which did so heart-burn this Greedy, covetous Miser, that he would not sell one peck of his Corn that day, but caused it all to be set up, & said, *Let whose will sell, for he would not, for if he kept it but two or three years longer, he hopt to sell it as dear as Mercers do their Pepper, which is after the Rate of sixteen-pence the pound*: This was told me by one that heard the words spoke. And truely I fear their be too many such greedy covetous hounds as he, that had rather see the poor starve, then relieve them with one Quarr of Corn, or think it

it better to keep a pack of dogs then maintain a fatherless child or two, but though there be so many such base men as they, yet God hath planted his grace in some mens hearts, and awaken their consciences in these Dear and bad times that poor People now goes through, as one I shall instance unto you, which is this.

An honest godly Farmer living at a small Village called Wel-ling, within three miles of the City of Wells, in the county of Somerset, whose name I am obliged to conceal, having no leave from him to publish it, he taking into consideration the deplorable condition of many poor families round about him, that was almost ready to starve, he resolved to afford them all the pitty & charity he could to relieve their want and misery, and also to contribute what he could spare to their relief; And to that purpose having a considerable store of wheat by him, he freely sold it to all such as he knew to be poor people after the rate of six shillings a bushel, although it were generally sold by all others in the Markets thereabouts at ten and eleven shillings at least, and thus he continued selling most part of the winter in the year of our Lord, 1673; And the Spring following in the year, 1674. As long as he had any wheat left that he could spare from his own necessary use, and by this Christian compassionate Dealing 'tis verily believed he was under God a means to preserve above an hundred families.

This good *Samaritan*, though he had a competent estate to live contented and comfortable with, yet he was no great Rich man, which occasioned several of his rich Neighbours to look upon themselves far beyond him in point of estate, and thus forth they began to envy and deride him, as acting very foolishly; in not making the most of his own, as they vainly called it, forgetting that whatsoever we enjoy, 'tis but lent us by the Lord, who expects it to be improved to his service, and the good of our fellow creatures: One of these churlish *Nabals*, as 'tis said, one day telling him that if he parted with his Corn so fillily, he would short-

ly come to want Bread himself : To all which this good man meekly answered, that he thought it his duty to relieve people in distress, to his ability : that he reckoned that he might afford it at that rate he sold it for, and verily believed he should never be the poorer for nor exacting those unreasonable prizes which others took for that God was able to make up to him some other way, and that he would cast himself wholly on the Lords good Providence.

And now Christian Hearers, prepare your attentions to observe Gods wonderful making good that promise in his Holy Word.

That he will never deceive them that trust in him, for by a strange means he hath been pleased to return to this Charitable Farmer ten fold, in a marvellous Crop of Wheat, such as never was in any age before, for having sown a piece of ground with Wheat, containing above Ten Acres, though the soil were but mean, and not any way considerable repared by amendment, yet the blades came up very thick, and promising a good crop, but what was more infinitely wonderful, when it came to Ear, there came forth several and distinct Ears upon one straw, some having seven, some eight, some nine, and so to thirteen upon some, so that throughout all that Ten Acres of Corn, every stalk one with another may be justly reckoned to produce Ten Ears a piece, the Wheat is of that kind which they call bearded, and has many bristles growing up with the Ears, the straws are somewhat bigger then Ordinary, yet not much, and 'tis very wonderful to think how they should be able to support such a weight, for the Ears are generally large and full of excellent Wheat, so that it is reasonably computed by the most modest Guessers, that there is as much Wheat produced upon these Ten Acres, as ever there was before upon Ten times the same quantity of ground, for that it yeilds in Threshing answerable to the bulk and growth of it. This Relation



tion is a truth known and admired throughout most of the west of England, and to several persons in this City of London, who has brought up divers lately from those parts, and are to be seen in divers Coffee-houses about the City: some scoffing Atheist may by chance render it to be a lye, and will not believe it to be a thing of truth, for some be more like Jews then Christians, and will not believe any thing but what their own eyes do see, but I hope the more sober finding it an undoubted reality of which they cannot but be satisfied, upon a small inquiry will regard it with more consideration, and give glory to God, who by so remarkable an instance hath been pleased to declare his providence and make known, not only that he is, as to his existence, that he is a rewarder sometimes even in this life of all those that trust in him and obey his commandments, and may this president awaken all to abandon their cruelty & uncharitableness, & learn to do good with what the Lord hath bestowed and given unto them in temperate blessings, for where the Lord gives much, much he expects of them again, to the use of the poor, as you may see in *Pro. 19, 17.* *He that hath pitty on the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again.* But men are grown to that pass they will not believe God, but rather trust to their own wicked and sinful lusts, and spend pounds on their base corrupt wills, in feasting and junketing, to fill their stinking bodies full of diseases, with excessive eating and drinking, whilst many would be glad of the least of that to refresh them with, as many gluts, and gives up again, and whilst they be thus merry, with Warm Lodging, Good Fires, fine Apparel, and as is said, has the world in a Sling, and makes so much of themselves, these I say will hardly give a Meals Meat to a hungry belly, or an old Coat to Chiver the Nakedness of a poor fatherless Child, or a peck of coals to a distressed widdow to undress her poor babes by: No, no, I say, these love so much of pleasure, they can't indure the poor at their Doors, but like *Dives*, set their Dogs to drive them away. There is, I fear,

too many that be like unto that greedy young man in the Gospel, that came to our Blessed Saviour to know how he might be saved, and when he had heard that he must give all to the poor, he went away with a sorrowful heart, for he had great Possessions, as you may read more at large, in *Mat. 9. 21.* Men are grown so greedy of gain, that they will with a willing mind deceive the poor laborers of their wages: gripe them of that which is their due, & think they never work cheap enough to enrich their covetous desires, for they lie hoarding up their money, & make it their god, for where their riches lyes there their heart is also, but know, oh man, that the Lord will bring you to a reckoning at last, then you will curse the day that ever you was born, & wish you had never known what riches was, without thou hadst made better use of it, as the Lord had commanded thee. The Prophet *Jerimiah* complaineth of this sin greatly, as you may see in *Jer. 6. 13.* For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them, every one is given unto covetousness, & from the prophet even unto the Priest, every one dealeth falsely, many more places in Scripture could I give to this purpose, as in *Hebrews 13. 5.* *Luke 12. 15.* *Ephes. 5. 3.* and in *Prov. 21. 26.* He covereth greedily all the day long, but the righteous giveth and spareth not: all along the Scripture, you shall not find one word of comfort for a covetous man, but to the charitable person there is a many good proofs, as you may find, *Pro. 11. 25.* *The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.* Thus you may see how he that is bountiful to the poor God will never let want, neither in this world nor that to come, some thinks if they give but a shilling or two in 7 year is enough, but if they spend 10 or 20 shillings in 2 or 3 hours idly, that is not thought too much, I wish that men would be wiser, & lay up for their own salvation, which charity is the boord of perfectness, *Colos. 3. 14.*

Thus to conclude, I desire all good Christians to be charitable to their poor brethren, and God will restore again to them tenfold.





